

REMARKS

Claims 6-27 and 29-32 are pending in the present application. Claims 6, 18, 19, 22, 25 and 29 have been amended. Claims 5 and 28 have been canceled.

Information Disclosure Statement

The Examiner is respectfully requested to acknowledge receipt of the Information Disclosure Statement filed concurrently herewith, and to confirm that the corresponding document submitted therewith has been considered and will be cited of record in the present application.

Claim Objections

Claims 8-17 and 18-27 have been objected to because the claims are respectively identical, and dependent on base claim 7. Claim 18 has been amended to be dependent upon current claim 29. The Examiner is therefore respectfully requested to withdraw this objection.

Claim Rejections-35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 5 and 28 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Nishioka reference (U.S. Patent No. 5,371,476).

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant respectfully notes the Examiner's acknowledgment that claims 30-32 are allowed.

Applicant also respectfully notes the Examiner's acknowledgment that claims 6, 7 and 29 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Although Applicant does not necessarily concede that the above noted prior art rejection is proper, claims 6 and 29 have been amended to be in independent form, in view of the Examiner's acknowledgment of allowable subject matter, to advance prosecution of this application. The Examiner is therefore respectfully requested to acknowledge that claims 6-27 and 29 are allowable.

Conclusion

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the corresponding rejection, and to pass all the claims of the present application to issue, for at least the above reasons.

In the event that there are any outstanding matters remaining in the present application, please contact Andrew J. Telesz, Jr. (Reg. No. 33,581) at (571) 283-0720 in the Washington, D.C. area, to discuss these matters.

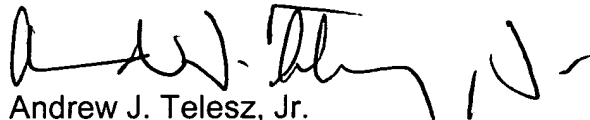
Pursuant to the provisions of 37 C.F.R. 1.17 and 1.136(a), the Applicant hereby petitions for an extension of three (3) months to March 22, 2005, for the period in which

to file a response to the outstanding Office Action. The required fee of \$1020.00 should be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0238.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment for any additional fees that may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-0238.

Respectfully submitted,

VOLENTINE FRANCOS & WHITT, P.L.L.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. J. Telesz, Jr.', followed by a large, stylized flourish or checkmark.

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